

THEY HATED ME WITHOUT CAUSE



THEY HATED JESUS, AND THEY WILL HATE YOU

This has been a difficult article to write, and it still pains me, but it must be written.

When we look around us today, there is growing antagonism and persecution against Christians. Just this week, I experienced such a situation at the office. The attitude towards me and the one or two other Christian believers here, is hostile at best. Then, when you look at the work ethic of those who act this way towards us, you can sense in their approach that they are utterly and totally lost. Where do we find common ground? How do we reach them?

Jesus made a clear distinction between the love Christians should have towards one another and the love of the world. The “world”, the unbelievers, hate those that live in the light because they themselves are in darkness (John 3:19-20). In His last teaching before His crucifixion, he gave this advice to the disciples:

¹⁷These things I command you, that ye love one another. ¹⁸If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. ¹⁹If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you. – **John 15:17-19**

The world hates those who stand for the truth and who have been chosen by Jesus Himself. Jesus confirms again to His disciples that they, the Jews, hated Him:

²⁵But this cometh to pass, that the word might be fulfilled that is written in their law, They hated me without a cause. – **John 15:25**

He quotes from Psalm 35:

¹⁹Let not them that are mine enemies wrongfully rejoice over me: neither let them wink with the eye that hate me without a cause. – **Psalm 35:19**

The world out there does not want Jesus Christ and what He represents – the love God has for all of mankind. They know, even as unsaved sinners, that turning to Jesus requires them to let go of the selfish lives they are leading. Instead, they will rather ridicule those who are walking in the light. The difference between the gospel of salvation and eternal life, and the world’s message of eternal damnation is the focus. The gospel of Jesus Christ commands us to love **one another** (John 15:17), but the message of the world is to **love yourself**. Each of the traits given here focuses on main himself and how he can please himself and not others:

²For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, ³Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, ⁴Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; ⁵ Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away. – **2 Timothy 3:2-5**

As I read this part, two things stand out: The people Paul writes about those that have “a form of godliness”; and we must “turn away” from such people.

For me it seems to imply that they maintain an image that is false, ready to strike at any moment – the wolves in sheep’s clothing. Paul’s warning is that we should not have anything to do with such people but turn away from them. In my situation at the office this means that it is better to just walk away from a situation that is potentially loaded with conflict. The devil wants us as believers to be sucked into the situation so that there can be conflict, and the believer blamed for it. Yet, I find it painful that in a situation where I must be the light, the light is no longer there, **because they do not want the light**. They prefer demonic darkness.

The world is spinning out of control as we rapidly descend into utter chaos just before God the Father gives the command to His Son Jesus to go towards the Earth, give a shout, and collect all those that are part of the Church, the bride. The world has already given up. It has no answer for global conflict. They will not find an answer because they are not prepared to find it in God’s Word. Instead, they are looking for one person, their ungodly saviour, who will come, be accepted by the masses, and who will lead them to destruction:

⁸And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming: ⁹Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, ¹⁰And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. ¹¹And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: ¹²That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness. – 2

Thessalonians 2:8-12

When I read this, I am saddened by the fact that people **do not want** to receive the love of the truth to be saved. Because they do not want to yield, God will send them the strong delusion – the antichrist, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, and whose lie they will believe and be eternally damned as a result. If it was only a few that this happened to, we could have said they were simply war casualties. The reality is that of most people living right now, many do not yet know Jesus because they have not received the gospel of salvation. There is a chance still that they could be saved. The rest, the majority, are headed for destruction from which there is no escape.

Take some time to read the first chapter of Paul’s letter to the church in Rome. How sad it is when people become so wicked that God gives up on them. Paul uses the phrase “God gave them over...” three times. To give them over means He abandoned them, not as an act of selfishness as we see with people who abandon others or something to further their own cause, but because He really has no hope for them. See Romans 1:18-32.

CONCLUSION

All I can do is to be the light and salt; do my work; pray for unbelievers in my office; and leave the rest to God. Getting back to the title of this lesson, take comfort in the fact that if you are in the same situation as I am, you belong to Jesus and nothing and no one can take you out of His hand. I take comfort in the fact that if they hate me, it is because they can see that I am different, that I am crucified with Christ (Galatians 2:20). I must be worried when they do not hate me in some way or another, which will be proof that I am one of them.